

ECON 4150 Public Economics and Policy Analysis

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00 PM – 3:20 PM at Sage Hall (SAGE) 356

Instructor Contact

Name: Dr. Hanchen Jiang

Delivery method: In person: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00PM – 3:20PM at SAGE 356
Course announcements will be made via **UNT Email**
Course materials will be available on **Canvas**

Hybrid Office Hours: Both in-person and remote via Zoom (Details to be announced in class)

Communication: Please contact me via email at hanchen.jiang@unt.edu

Course Prerequisites

- You must have completed **ECON 3550 Intermediate Micro-Theory with a grade of C or better** to be eligible to meet the prerequisite requirements for this course.
- Knowledge of Statistics and/or Econometrics would be helpful but not required.

Course Materials

- **Jonathan Gruber, Public Finance and Public Policy**, 6th edition, Macmillan, 2019 (Earlier editions of the textbook are totally fine.)
- Everything else you need will be provided via **Canvas** and all the announcements will be made via **UNT emails**.

Course Description and Objectives

- In this course, we will study the role of the government in the economy, both theoretically and empirically. The aim is to provide an understanding of the reasons for government intervention in the economy, the costs and benefits of possible government policies, and the response of economic agents to the government's actions.
- We will learn both theoretical and empirical tools of public economics and policy analysis. The course covers topics on taxation, externality, public goods, education, income distribution, and anti-poverty programs. We will also discuss related public policies and how to evaluate them scientifically using data.
- By the nature of the material, the course is fairly quantitative, and writing intensive.

Course Requirements

This course is delivered only in-person, and active participation in class is expected.

Lecture notes will be posted on Canvas before each class begins. These slides are *not* self-explanatory. Note also that lectures do *not* always cover 100% of the material from the slides. Therefore, **attending the lectures is critical for learning and for success in the class.**

Here is the list of graded items and their contribution to your final grade. **The final grade will be based on a weighted average of the percentage grades on each assignment.**

Item	Percentage of Final Grade
Problem Sets	25%
Essay Challenges	15%
Mid-term Exam 1	20%
Mid-term Exam 2	20%
Comprehensive Final Exam	20%
Sum of all Items Total Possible	100%

Problem Sets

For each module, there will be problem sets which are designed to help you solidify and enhance your understanding of the material taught in lectures. You are expected to answer questions based on conceptual understanding of ideas taught in lectures, and solve analytical problems related to those covered in lectures. The deadlines of problem sets will be explicitly announced and strictly enforced.

Essay Challenges

There will be multiple short essays challenges for selected topics, which are designed to encourage you to read academic articles in depth, to summarize what authors have written, to connect the papers with what we discuss in class and what is going on in the real world, and to think creatively and critically. These essay challenges are projects to be done during regular class time, and specific guidance and requirement will be announced later in class.

Exams

Three exams will be given during the semester: **two midterm exams and one comprehensive final exam.** The exam dates and material covered on each exam will be confirmed later.

All exams are closed-book and closed-notes. However, you will be able to prepare a hand written cheat sheet on a letter size page (both sides) and use it during tests. A nonprogrammable calculator (not a cell phone) can also be used during the exam.

You should make sure that the exam schedule is not conflicted with other courses. See the university Final Exam Schedules: <https://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule>

Grading

There is no way to perfectly calibrate an exam so that, for example, students with A performances will score between 90 and 100 point, students with B performances score between 80 and 90 points, etc. Each mid-term exam and the final exam will be curved as needed for the performances to match the awarded grades (**see below to check my criteria in this course**).

- A: 90-100%. The student demonstrates knowledge of the economic models and the intuition behind them and they also demonstrate an ability to apply the models to novel situations.
- B: 75-89%. The student demonstrates knowledge of the economic models and the intuition behind them, but has trouble applying the models to novel situations.
- C: 60-74%. The student demonstrates knowledge of the economics models, but has trouble explaining the intuition behind them and cannot apply the models to novel situations.
- F: < 60%. The student demonstrates little understanding of the course content.

Grade Appeals

If you think that an exam has been incorrectly graded, submit a written explanation of the problem no later than 1 week after the exams have been returned. This deadline applies regardless of whether you are present in class at the time the exams are returned (e.g. graded in canvas and announced via email). I will respond to you in writing as soon as possible. If there is still a disagreement, schedule a Zoom appointment so that we may further discuss the problem.

Tentative Course Plan

Week	Date	Topic
1	8/18 and 8/20	Course Introduction (Gruber, Ch1) Theoretical Tools (Gruber, Ch2)
2	8/25 and 8/27	Theoretical Tools (Gruber, Ch2)
3	9/1 and 9/3	Monday Labor Day – No Class Empirical Tools (Gruber, Ch3)
4	9/8 and 9/10	Empirical Tools (Gruber, Ch3)
5	9/15 and 9/17	Taxation: Introduction (Gruber, Ch18)
6	9/22 and 9/24	Taxation: Incidence (Gruber, Ch19)
7	9/29 and 10/1	Midterm Exam 1
8	10/6 and 10/8	Externalities (Gruber, Ch5)
9	10/13 and 10/15	Public Goods (Gruber, Ch7)
10	10/20 and 10/22	Education (Gruber, Ch11)
11	10/27 and 10/29	Income Distribution: Introduction
12	11/3 and 11/5	Midterm Exam 2
13	11/10 and 11/12	Income Distribution: Welfare Programs Overview (Gruber, Ch17)
14	11/17 and 11/19	Income Distribution: Labor Income Tax and EITC (Gruber, Ch21)
15	11/24 and 11/26	Thanksgiving – No Class
16	12/1 and 12/3	Special Topic – TBD
	Final Exam Week	Comprehensive Final Exam

Contacting Me

In person: If you are unable to meet during my office hours, please email me to set up a mutually convenient time.

Via Email: **All email must be sent through your UNT student email address (my.unt.edu) specifically to me at hanchen.jiang@unt.edu .**

- Email from any other source or to any other email address is unlikely to make it through UNT filters and will not be answered.
- Please note that I may *not* see messages sent through Canvas. Therefore, send an email instead of a Canvas message to ensure a response.
- If you contact me via email, the **subject line** of your email must include “ECON 4150” followed by the subject of your inquiry. For example: ECON 4150 – Exam 1 Grading.
- Whenever you contact the teaching assistant, you should always include me in that email.
- Email correspondence should be appropriate and should not contain requests for me to provide you with missed assignments, handouts, notes, grades, etc. and should never be a request to treat your coursework and grade differently than what is outlined on this syllabus. Inappropriate emails and student requests will be forwarded to the appropriate campus office and/or official.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Always use your professors’ proper title: Dr. or Prof., or if in doubt use Mr. or Ms.
- Unless specifically invited, don’t refer to your instructor by first name.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Avoid slang terms such as and texting abbreviations.
- Use standard fonts such as Ariel, Calibri or Times new Roman and use a size 11 or 12 point font
- AVOID USING ALL CAPS WHEN TYPING, IT IS REALLY ANNOYING TO THE READER.
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :) or ☺.
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Do not send confidential information via e-mail

- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these [Engagement Guidelines](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (<https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips>) for more information.

AI, Plagiarism, and Academic Integrity

The "unauthorized" use of any person or technology that assists in a student's assignment, project, or paper is considered cheating under the UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy (UNT Policy 6.003). Unless a professor or instructor gives explicit "authorization," AI cannot be used to complete assignments, projects, or papers. Doing so will result in a "cheating" violation.

Office of the Provost. 2024. "Frequently Asked Questions -- Faculty." Student Success. <https://vpaa.unt.edu/ss/integrity/faq-faculty.html>

AI should not be used to assist in writing papers, searching for sources, or creating citations. Citations provided by AI are fabricated by mimicking existing bodies of work. In most cases, AI will pull direct quotes from existing sources to answer queries and make-up information about the source.

AI can be used ethically to help you develop an outline for a paper, generate ideas, and learn a citation style. Talk to your [subject librarian](#) or professor about how you can use AI ethically.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism at UNT

UNT values academic integrity. The Office of the Provost and Student Success provide the following resources to understanding academic integrity, policies, and resources for students, faculty, and administration leadership.

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship.

See UNT Policy [06.003, Student Academic Integrity](#)

The Office of the Provost and the Office for Student Success is responsible for issues concerning academic integrity. The Academic Integrity Officer works with faculty and students regarding investigations of misconduct. Please submit all questions related to academic integrity to academic.integrity@unt.edu.

Other Course Policies

Late work or Make-up Exams

No late submission or make-up exams will be given unless you notify me of the situation as soon as possible by email and can provide documented evidence of a valid excuse. The instructor is the judge of what constitutes a valid excuse.

Withdrawals

University policy relative to withdrawals will be followed. Please consult with your academic advisor or UNT academic calendar for the last date you can:

- Drop with an automatic grade of W
- Drop with a W if you are passing the course
- Last day you can drop a course at all

It is vital that you consult with your academic advisor prior to dropping any course. It can have dire effects on your financial aid and/or academic record.

Copyright Notice

Materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection. Materials may include, but are not limited to: documents, slides, images, audio, and video. Materials in this course Web site are only for the use of students enrolled in this course, for purposes associated with this course, and may not be retained for longer than the class term. Unauthorized retention, duplication, distribution, or modification of copyrighted materials is strictly prohibited by law.

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. You should receive an email from SPOT listing the timeframe in which you can participate in the SPOT evaluation.

Technical Requirements & Skills

Minimum Technology Requirements and Skills

- Computer with speakers, webcam with microphone and Microsoft Office
- Reliable internet access
- Working knowledge of Canvas [Canvas Technical Requirements](https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements)
(<https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>)

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

Provide a list of course-specific technical skills learners must have to succeed in the course, such as:

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using spreadsheet programs
- Using presentation and graphics programs

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a

Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UIT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328) (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

Other UNT Policies

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website \(https://disability.unt.edu/\)](https://disability.unt.edu/).

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum

at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website](http://www.ecfr.gov/) (<http://www.ecfr.gov/>). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not

require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See [UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002>).

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.
2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.
3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

Example: This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions. Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.

Class Recordings & Student Likenesses

Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be recorded for students enrolled in this class section to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)

- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

**UNT eulDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (https://success.unt.edu/asc)

- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)